

CHAPTER 1: SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) assesses the environmental impacts of proposed improvements to rehabilitate portions of Jefferson Park, located in Seattle's Beacon Hill neighborhood. The proposed improvements include opportunities to incorporate portions of properties owned and operated by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) for expanded park use. The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) will be evaluating numerous project elements and options as they finalize a Site Plan for Jefferson Park. This chapter describes the background of the project, and summarizes the proposed action and environmental review process. A summary of the construction and operational impacts anticipated from Parks' proposed alternatives is also provided.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Jefferson Park is located in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of the City of Seattle. The project area is a 50-acre portion of the larger Jefferson Park (137 acres) and includes properties owned and operated by SPU. For purposes of this study, the project area is bounded by Beacon Avenue South to the east, South Spokane Street to the north, 15th Avenue South and 16th Avenue South to the west, and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Asa Mercer Middle School to the south (Figure 1-1). The project area does not include the golf facilities operated by Seattle Golf (Seattle Municipal Golf): the 9-hole course, golf clubhouse, golf maintenance facility, and driving range.

At present, Jefferson Park contains a number of facilities, including a community center, basketball and tennis courts, children's play area, lawn bowling club, horticulture facility, and golfcourses (Figure 1-2). The Park has expansive views of downtown Seattle, Elliott Bay, and the Olympic Mountains. The Park property was originally acquired by the City of Seattle in 1898, and officially named Jefferson Park in 1908. The two SPU Beacon Hill reservoirs were placed in service in 1911. A plan for Jefferson Park was developed in 1912 by the Olmsted Brothers, a nationally recognized landscape architecture firm at that time. Other than the golf course and tree-lined Beacon Avenue South, little of that original plan was actually implemented. The Park is both a local and regional resource, used by those residing in the neighborhood as well as by those coming to it as a destination park.

Under its 2001 Water Supply Plan Update, SPU identified a program to install floating covers at seven of its in-city open reservoirs as part of its 2001-2020 Capital Facilities Program. The South Reservoir was one of those seven open reservoirs identified in the program for rehabilitation. Relocating the water storage facility from the North Reservoir to the South Reservoir would then leave a vacant North Reservoir. It was determined that the North Reservoir could be retired and a coordinated effort between SPU and Parks to decommission the North Reservoir for expanded park use was incorporated into development of the Jefferson Park Site Plan.

Subsequent to the release of the Draft EIS, SPU, under the direction of the Mayor, developed an initiative to reconstruct buried reservoirs at all reservoirs in the City formerly planned for floating covers. Council approval of the Mayor's plan will be required prior to inclusion in the City's

Capital Improvement Program. If and when approved, SPU could then proceed with developing the demolition and reconstruction project and conducting the appropriate environmental analysis. In the meantime, Parks is scheduled to make a decision on the Jefferson Park Site Plan in order to move forward on needed Park improvements.

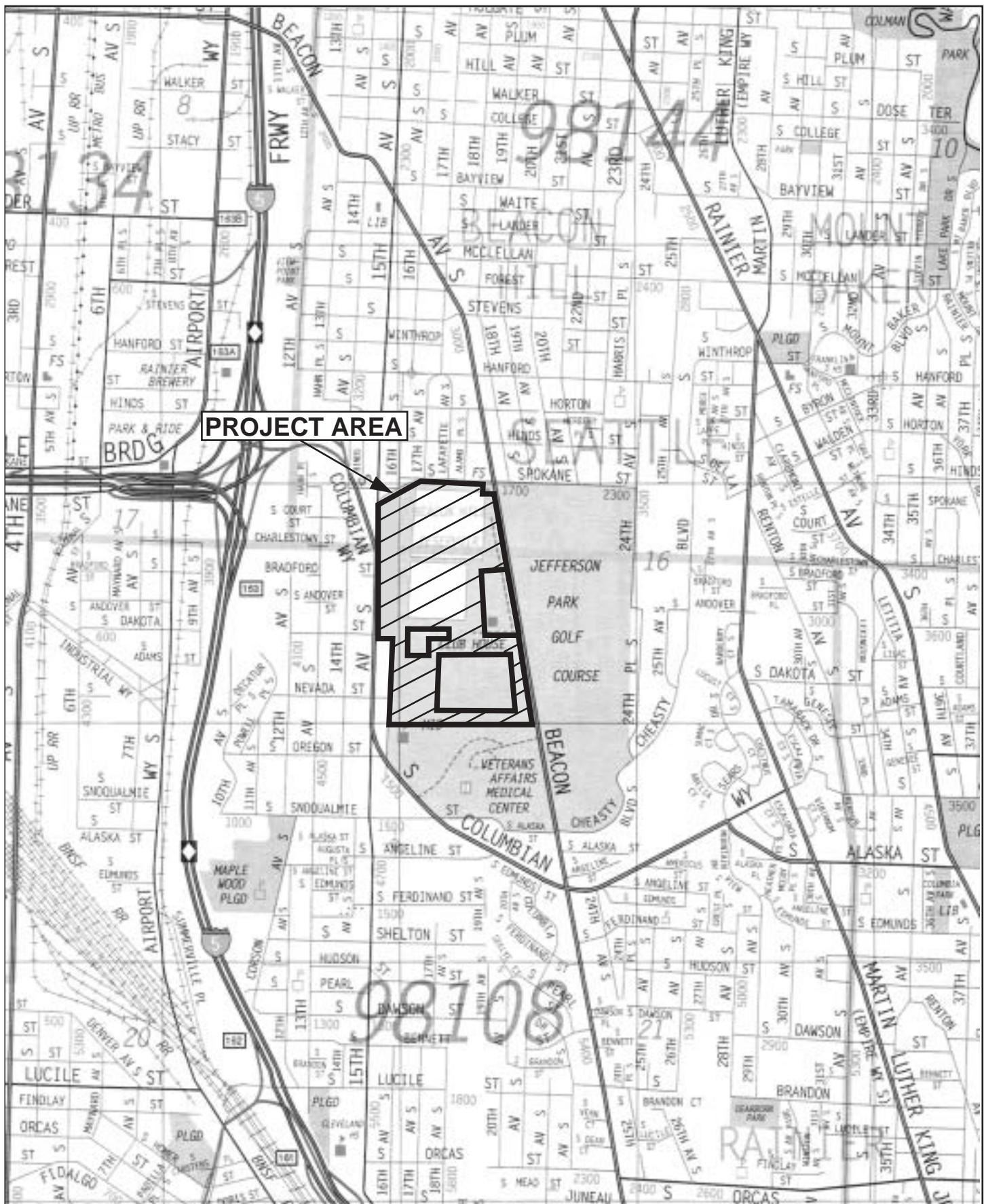
Parks began working with the Beacon Hill community, SPU and other stakeholders to identify park features that should be replaced, upgraded or added to Jefferson Park. A number of improvements to existing facilities are being proposed including: demolition of the existing Community Center and reconstructing a new Community Center Activities Building; construction of a new gymnasium; new basketball and tennis courts; relocating and expanding the children's outdoor play area; new turf at Jefferson Field; and improved trails, plantings, water features and other site amenities. Major landform changes or terracing along the western boundary of the project area would allow for increased use of this currently steep, unused portion of the Park. Traffic and pedestrian improvements are also proposed to facilitate access to and from the residential areas to the north and west of the project area across the major arterials. Proposed uses of the North Reservoir area would be construction of a large open lawn area suitable for multiple park uses including playfields, picnicking, festivals, and other recreational activities.

Development of the Site Plan also revitalized neighborhood discussions for covering SPU's South Reservoir with a "hard lid" (SPU uses the term, "buried reservoir", which is the term used in this document) instead of a floating cover. Construction of a buried reservoir would allow park spaces to be constructed on top of the reservoir, increasing the area of the Park and providing a more unified park experience. The floating cover concept is an assumed existing condition in Alternative A. The buried reservoir concept is assumed as an existing condition in Alternative B; Parks' action under review for this EIS is the proposed development of the Sports Plateau on top of the buried South Reservoir.

Decisions on the use and operation of the North and South Reservoirs will be made by City decision makers, weighing the technical, environmental, and overall public benefits and costs associated with converting these reservoir areas to park use. This EIS provides analysis of potential environmental impacts and mitigations to help inform City decision making. As more detailed technical feasibility analysis and design is conducted on these proposals by Parks and SPU, the layouts or configurations as assumed in this document may change and additional environmental analysis may be warranted. However, this document should serve as a foundation for subsequent environmental analysis as needed.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Parks has been working with the Beacon Hill community, SPU, and other park users to identify park features that should be replaced, upgraded, or added to Jefferson Park. Information from this EIS process will assist Parks in finalizing the improvements to be incorporated into the Jefferson Park Site Plan. The project area where these improvements are proposed to be implemented is approximately 50 acres in size and includes both the North and South Reservoirs, owned and operated by SPU. The proposed improvements, listed below, are organized as those having the highest probability of being implemented within an 4 8-year timeframe, as well as those project proposals that may be on a much longer timeframe to implement. The proposed projects and options under consideration include:

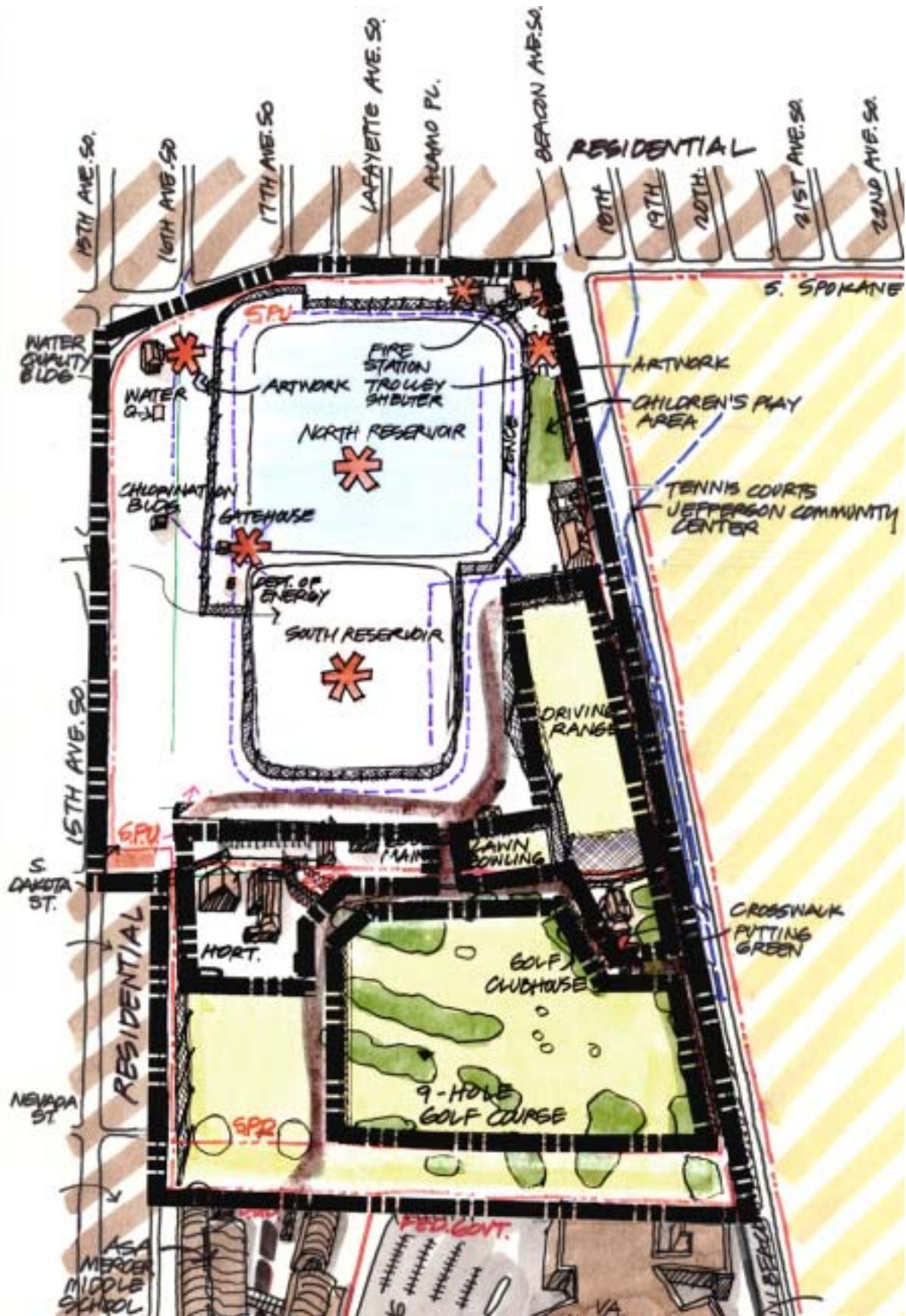


NORTH
No Scale

File name: 22010vic.ai
Original graphic by: ACT
Edits by: TBOAD
Date: 6/26/02

Reproduced with permission granted by THOMAS BROS.
MAPS. This map is copyrighted by THOMAS BROS. MAPS. It
is unlawful to copy or reproduce all or any part thereof, whether
for personal use or resale, without permission.

FIGURE 1-1.
VICINITY MAP
JEFFERSON PARK SITE PLAN EIS
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON



NORTH
No Scale

File name: 22010aerial.ai
Original graphic by: ACT
Edits by:
Date: 5/3/02



Source: The Portico Group.

FIGURE 1-2.
EXISTING CONDITIONS
JEFFERSON PARK SITE PLAN EIS
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Interim Plan

- decommissioning of the existing North Reservoir;
- installation of a large, grassy, open space or meadow (Great Meadow) at the former location of the North Reservoir intended as a multi-use open lawn area, which could accommodate a variety of park activities, such as picnicking, community events, youth soccer, other field sports, and other recreational activities;
- demolition of the Jefferson Community Center
- construction of new 14,000 square foot Community Center ~~Activity Rooms~~ Activities Building;
- construction of a new 10,000 square foot Community Center Gymnasium with on-site parking;
- installation of a new traffic signal at 15th Avenue South and South Dakota Street;
- Jefferson Field renovations;
- various other site improvements

Long-range Plan

- installation of sports fields in the area of the South Reservoir, in the event it becomes available for park use;
- construction of a new pedestrian bridge over South Spokane Street; and
- construction of a second new 10,000 square foot Community Center Gymnasium.

These actions are described in more detail in Chapter 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: PURPOSE OF THE EIS

This EIS ~~is being~~was prepared under the direction of the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation. The purpose of this EIS is to serve as an informative environmental analysis of proposed improvements to Jefferson Park to ensure that potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures for the proposed alternatives are identified and described. The EIS process enables interested citizens and agencies to review the proposal and comment on the proposed alternatives. As required by SEPA (WAC 197-11-400) and the City's SEPA Ordinance, this EIS, including public comments, will be one of several information sources the City will use to evaluate proposed alternatives in finalizing their plans for Jefferson Park. The EIS process will also assist Seattle Public Utilities in developing their own environmental documentation for actions they may propose for SPU properties in the Jefferson Park project area. The City of Seattle will use the information provided in the EIS as one part of the project approval process as described in SMC 25.05, Environmental Policies and Procedures ("SEPA Rules").

As required by SEPA, the EIS evaluates a series of alternatives. Alternative A—Interim Plan, examines the currently funded, programmed and/or planned improvements. Alternative B—Long-range Plan, evaluates park use of the South Reservoir area (in addition to the improvements included in Alternative A). This EIS includes a "No Action" alternative (Alternative C), also required by SEPA, which evaluates the likely outcomes if neither of the other alternatives is pursued. Chapter 2 provides a full description of each of these alternatives.

Table 1-1. Summary of Impacts and Mitigation, Alternative A – Interim Plan

Element	Impacts	Mitigation
Aesthetics/Light and Glare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of the Great Meadow, Terrace, and Jefferson Field would produce dust, mud, stockpiles of soil and debris, construction fencing, and/or construction equipment visible to nearby residents, park users, and passing vehicles. • Heavy trucks would enter and exit the project site for the duration of construction activities. • Residences to the west of Jefferson Field could notice increased lighting. Lights could remain on until 11pm. Viewers at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center would notice the additional light in the area of the playfield. • New basketball and tennis courts would include lighting that could remain on until 11pm. • Extended construction hours for fill placement may be required resulting in nighttime light impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor would implement dust suppression measures as needed. • Consider using solid fencing to screen areas where activity may be dormant for long periods of time and those areas where negative aesthetic impacts to residences would be greatest. Consider allowing community to paint fence with murals or apply other art to discourage graffiti. • Lighting would be directed away from residential areas and cutoff fixtures would be used at ballfields to reduce light spill over. • Limit extended hours for fill placement to the extent possible. • <u>Construction lighting, if required, would be appropriately shielded to direct light to the construction area and directed away from residences and roadways.</u>
Air and Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition of the concrete lining of the North Reservoir would have a substantial noise impact to surrounding residences. • During construction of the Great Meadow, Terrace, and Jefferson Field, noise from heavy truck traffic would be noticeable to nearby residents and park users. • Noise associated with construction of the new gymnasium and community center would be noticeable to nearby residents to the north of South Spokane Street as well as park users. • Demolition of the existing community center would create noise and dust noticeable to residents north and west of the project area, passing vehicles, golfers, and park users. • <u>The existing Jefferson Community Center may be built with asbestos-containing materials.</u> • Nearby residents could notice an increase in noise during sporting events or festivals. • Maintenance activities would produce noise that could be detectable to nearby residents and park users. • Extended construction hours for fill placement may be required resulting in nighttime noise impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors would comply with the City of Seattle Noise Ordinance SMC 25.08.410. • Construction vehicles and equipment would not be allowed to idle when not in use. • Jefferson Community Center demolition would comply with PSCAA Regulation III, Article 4: Asbestos Control Standards. • Activities would be required to comply with Seattle Noise Ordinance 25.08.500 that regulates "loud or raucous, frequent, repetitive, or continuous sounds ...<u>"</u> between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00a.m."

Element	Impacts	Mitigation
Air and Noise (contd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction activities would produce exhaust and dust that would temporarily affect air quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors would comply with PSCAA Regulation I, Section 9.20, Maintenance of Equipment. Contractors would comply with PSCAA Regulation I, Section 9.15, Fugitive Dust Control Measures.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Import of fill material to the site would create approximately 14 to 16 truck trips per hour during midday hours for up to 24 months. Temporary construction work force would increase the demand for on-site parking. Alternative A would result in approximately 1,680 (840 in / 840 out) new vehicle trips on an average weekday. During peak recreation times (spring and summer) parking demand could exceed on-site supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Construction Management Plan (CMP) would be developed to address traffic and pedestrian control with regard to truck routes. Explore the opportunity to coordinate transport of fill material for Park improvements with Sound Transit's excavation of material for the Beacon Hill Station and Tunnel to reduce volume of trucks on area roadways. Parking beyond that required by Code is proposed as part of Alternative A. Improve signage about various parking locations within the Park. Stagger scheduling of athletic fields to reduce same-time arrivals and departures; coordinate activities and events with Mercer Middle School and VA Medical Center to reduce concurrent period of peak demand. Consider developing shared parking agreements with Mercer Middle School and VA Medical Center. Pedestrian and bicycle access improvements are incorporated into the proposed site plan to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from the Park to reduce vehicle trips. Demolition and construction activities would be coordinated with SPD and SFD to identify access points during construction and operation phases. Locate and physically mark all utilities on project site prior to commencement of construction activities. Emphasize maintenance of storm drainage facilities to prevent urban flooding, especially during construction phases. On-site detention facilities would be incorporated into new water features in the site plan. Park lighting plan would focus on use of energy-efficient fixtures for both interior and exterior park uses.
Public Services and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utility service could be temporarily disrupted during construction activities. Storm drainage facilities on or near the project could experience some short-term sedimentation during construction. Additional storm runoff would be added to the existing storm drainage system due to construction of the Great Meadow and new impermeable surfaces such as additional tennis courts, picnic shelters, and restroom facilities. The need for electricity, water, sewer, and garbage pick-up would increase. 	

Element	Impacts	Mitigation
Public Services and Utilities (contd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During large gatherings, there may be an increased need for police patrols to ensure visitor safety and security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use City of Seattle Sustainable Building Policy to guide design and construction of new structures to the extent practicable. Encourage recycling opportunities for park users and maintenance operations by incorporating into design features of indoor and outdoor spaces. Develop an events plan with police and fire departments regarding special/large events.
Historic Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction activities may occasionally affect access to the golf clubhouse as well as clubhouse parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate construction activities as far as possible away from potentially historic resources.

Table 1-2. Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Alternative B – Long-range Plan

Element	Impacts	Mitigation
Aesthetics/Light and Glare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All impacts listed for Alternative A are included in Alternative B. Construction of the Sports Plateau and picnic area would produce dust, mud, stockpiles of soil and debris, construction fencing, and/or construction equipment visible to nearby residents, park users, and passing vehicles. The new overpass across South Spokane Street could be a distraction for passengers in vehicles traveling east and west along this street. Some shading could occur to the residences adjacent to the overpass structure. If the fields on the Sports Plateau are lit during evening hours, nighttime views of the City and Elliott Bay from locations such as the lawn bowling facility would be diminishedblocked. The lit area would dominate the immediate foreground. If the fields on the Sports Plateau are lit during evening hours, viewers west of 15th Avenue South and north of South Spokane Street would notice a greater concentration of light than currently exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation measures listed for Alternative A also apply to Alternative B. Contractor would implement dust suppression measures as needed. Design the overpass structure with architectural features that would add interest to the structure and minimize its bulk and scale. Work with neighbors during design phase to reduce localized aesthetic impacts from construction and operation of the pedestrian overpass. Design the overpass structure to minimize the effects of shading to nearby residences. Plantings would visually enhance the earthen berm at the north end of the pedestrian overpass.

Element	Impacts	Mitigation
Air and Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All impacts listed for Alternative A are included in Alternative B. During construction of the Sports Plateau and picnic grounds, noise from heavy truck traffic would be noticeable to nearby residents, golfers, and park users. Noise associated with construction of the new pedestrian overpass would be noticeable to nearby residents, passing vehicles, and park users. Construction of a second new gymnasium would create noise noticeable to residents north and west of project area, passing vehicles, golfers, and park users. <u>Jefferson Community Center may be built with asbestos-containing materials.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation measures listed for Alternative A also apply to Alternative B.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All impacts listed for Alternative A are included in Alternative B. Construction activities associated with the Sports Plateau and picnic grounds would result in approximately 22 truck trips per day. The Sports Plateau adult recreational activities would result in approximately 360 new trips (180 in / 180 out) on an average day. Recreational activities at the Sports Plateau would result in an increased parking demand. The second new gymnasium would result in approximately 320 trips (160 in / 160 out) on an average day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation measures listed for Alternative A also apply to Alternative B.
Public Services and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction-related impacts to utilities and public services would be the same as described for Alternative A. Operation-related impacts to utilities would be same as described for Alternative A. The addition of playfields as part of the Sports Plateau could increase the need for emergency medical services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation measures listed for Alternative A also apply to Alternative B.
Historic Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction-related impacts would be the same as described for Alternative A. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation measures listed for Alternative A also apply to Alternative B.